DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 032 524 AL 002 063

By-Tsuboi, Chuji
An Intensive Training Course in English.
Pub Date Jun 69
Note-10p.; Paper presented at the Regional Seminar of the SEAMEC Regional English Language Centre, Singapore, June 9-14, 1969.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
Descriptors-*Communication Skills, *English (Second Language), Instructional Innovation, *Intensive Language Courses, *Language Instruction, *Teaching Methods
Identifiers-*Council on Language Teaching Development of Japan

While "good" English is desirable in developing skill in the language as an international tool of communication, phonetic and grammatical perfection are not of prime importance. (The author observes that many Japanese are so conscious of rules that they are reluctant to speak in English.) The speaker must have, first of all, an intellectually valuable idea deserving of debate or discussion, and his English must be sufficient to participate in a group where communication is taking place. It is the primary aim of the ITC (Intensive Training Courses), set up by the Council on Language Teaching Development of Japan in 1968, to train students to overcome their reluctance to speak English by developing skill in communicating their ideas in English. Thirty-two ITC groups in English were set up throughout Japan. Each group, consisting of one Japanese English instructor, one native speaker informant furnished by the American Committee for Cooperation on English in Japan, and 15-20 students, was required to spend two weeks totally immersed in an English-speaking atmosphere. No specific method or theory for English teaching was recommended: the teachers were asked, however, to place as much emphasis on debating exercise as possible. Pre- and post-tests were given and "remarkable progress" was shown both in the written and the oral-aural tests. (AMM)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED032524

AN INTENSIVE TRAINING COURSE IN ENGLISH

By Chuji Tsuboi

Mr. Chairman, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Council on Language Teaching Development of Japan, which I represent, I would like to say how much we are pleased to be here and to meet all of you. I thank all the members of this Seminar, especially the chairman of the Organizing Committee for inviting us to join you and make your acquaintance. All the participants at this seminar have the enthusiasm of promoting and developing English education in Asian countries and the Council on Language Teaching Development is extremely happy to join you here, although Japan is not a member country of the SEAMEC organization.

Our Council is quite a new organization that was established only last year. Facts about the Council can be found in the brochures which have been distributed to your desks. This afternoon, I would like to give you a brief sketch of one of the projects which the Council is doing or is trying to do. But before doing so, I think it would be appropriate to say something about the present status of English education in Japan. This, I hope, will help you to understand the desirability or even the necessity of the new venture which our Council is involved in and which is not merely an addition to the many already existing kinds.

AL 002 083

English education in Japan may be said to be fairly active as a whole if the number of people who learn Erglish is the index to the problem. In almost all junior high schools, English is taught several hours per week throughout the three year course. In senior high schools, which are also three year courses, similar education on English is being given. In colleges and universities which are generally four year courses, English is taught during the freshman and sophomore years. In junior and senior years, students proceed to specialized major courses respectively and no English education is given to them any more except to those who major in English language or literature in the Department of Literature. Although most students who proceed to their respective specialities are not taught English in their junior and senior years in colleges, many of them frequently use books and articles written in English as their references. I may add that in entrance examinations to senior high schools and to colleges and universities, English is one of the major subjects to be tested. Especially in the entrance examination to colleges, the test problems are often so hard and sophisticated that I am afraid that even college teachers who draw up these problems would not perhaps get full marks themselves. Under these circumstances, students study and study and study ... English, and they may well be said to be reasonably good in their knowledge of English. College students learn English for at least eight long years and they have therefore a reasonably good ability of reading English.

They also have a reasonably good vocabulary of English. But, it is unfortunately true that they are scarcely trained to such an extent as to be able to use English without much difficulty as an international communication tool. This is really an unfortunate situation which Japan faces in this world of international arena. In order to rectify this unfortunate situation, many efforts are being made enthusiastically by various institutions in Japan. There are a number of English courses or schools of different grades which put stress on conversation drills and they are open to the public. A number of people, old and young, who have their own motives for learning English select one of these schools or courses and attend it. I think there are many varieties in their motives. Of course it is good that people try to improve their English whatever motives they may have, but what is more important for them is that they learn how to use English for their respective purposes which they have in mind. As I said before, most of the intelligent Japanese people can read English reasonably well as a non-English speaking people. But how to use it as a communication tool is quite a different problem. By communication, I do not mean that kind of communication that is needed at greetings, shopping, hotels, restaurants. What I really intend to mean by communication, is rather that kind that is needed in expressing in English, intelligently rich things or opinions which one has already in his mind, and in listening to or understanding what his counterparts say in English

about such matters. In this kind of communication, I would dare to say that phonetic and grammatical perfection is not of prime importance. I don't know how many of you will agree or not. I am pretty sure that many of you disagree. Of course good English is desirable but in this kind of communication there are two things which are more important. First, one has to have an intellectually valuable thing in his mind which deserves to be a subject or topic of international debate, discussion, talk or forum whatever you may call it. This is not a problem proper to English. This is rather a problem of human culture. Secondly, his English must be good enough to work in whatever gathering he may be taking part. "Good enough" does not mean that it should be a high standard of English. Often I have noticed that there are many Japanese who in the excess of observing phonetic and grammatical rules become rather hesitant or reluctant to say anything in English, especially when trying to communicate with English speaking people. It is the primary aim or principle of our Council to train these students to such an extent that they will not feel this kind of complex any more. I am not saying that we are going to train millions of college students in this way nor would it be possible if we wished to do so. What we are trying to do, is to fill up the gaps which have unduly been given no sufficient attention. In this sense, what I am going to talk about this afternoon, is a little bit away from the field of interest of most

of you. It is also different from the problem of levelling up of general English education in Japan. If I may be allowed to say something about myself, I am from the field of natural science, a poor man who does not know a single bit of English literature or linguistics. In my speciality in natural science, English is a kind of "must" in international communication whether it is in the form of personal discussion, report, paper, seminar, lecture, conference, or cooperative activity. I have gradually become able to use it without big difficulty. If my English works, it is not that I studied English as English, but rather only because I have been always using it.

Now what is the best way for attaining our specific objectives? Nobody knows. But as a first experiment, our Council had decided to set up a number of intensive training courses in English. By intensive training, it is meant the trainees in each course are requested to spend two straight weeks of camping. During this camping period, no one is allowed, in principle, to speak in Japanese. In other words, they are immersed totally in an English speaking atmosphere. Here is an admirable episode. In an intensive training course for college girl students, one day they went out for recreation and began to enjoy swimming. One of the girls had trouble while swimming in the river. She shouted, "Help me," in English not in Japanese!

Our intensive training courses were operated in the following way last year.

1) We set up 32 courses throughout Japan with about 20 college students in each.

2) We recruited Japanese English teachers from four year colleges and requested them to take charge of the ITC for their college students.

3) Our Council rendered financial aid for the expenditure needed for operating the courses.

With the assistance of the American Committee for Cooperation on English in Japan, we were able to have one native speaker informant provided for each course. Each instructor selected 15-20 students from his own college. So, one class consisted of one Japanese instructor, one native speaker informant and about 20 trainees. They spent two straight weeks under the same roof. Most of the Japanese instructors were from humanity departments, but it should be said there were several from science departments, technology departments and the like. The students who joined the course were 540 in total number. Our Council did not recommend to the instructors any specific method or theory for teaching. All that we asked them to do, was to place as much weight as practicable on debating exercise. The method of training differed therefore considerably from a class to another, according to the experience on the part of instructors, according to the ability on the part of students, according to their motivation and so on.

As I said before, the camp continued for two weeks and both immediately before and after the courses, students

were given almost the same test. The two tests will be referred to as pre-test and post-test. By "almost the same" it is meant that "piano" in the pre-test may become "violin" in the post-test, "Kuala Lumpur" in the pre-test may become "Singapore" in the post-test. We have adopted this method intentionally because we believe that this is the only way by which any subjective judgement can be avoided in evaluating students' progress and make objective numerical analysis possible.

As a matter of fact, the students made remarkable progress both in the written test and the oral and aural test. In the written test, the average score in the pre-test was 70.0, while that in the post-test went up to 77.8.

More remarkable was the progress made in aural comprehension ability. The aural comprehension tests were carried out as follows. The informant or the instructor read a certain short story and on the part of the students there were given four short sentences among which only one agreed or was compatible with the content of the story just read. Students were asked to mark the correct one. The whole test was composed of five sets of such problems, hence the full score was five points. Now, the statistics of the scores was as follows:

Score	Number of Students	
	Pre-test	Post-test
5	66	178
4	92	125
3	107	93
2	135	87
1	96	46
0	44	11
Total	540	540
Average	2.56	3.50
On the basis of 100	51.2	70.2

You will easily notice the remarkable progress which the students made.

There is one other point which deserves attention. The following table gives the average scores "y" for the aural comprehension post-test, calculated separately according to the students who got the scores "x" for the aural comprehension pre-test.

Pre-test x	Number of Students Pre-test	Their average in Post-test y	Rate of Progress
5	66	4.89	
4	92	4.36	0.36
3	107	3.77	0.39
2	135	3.17	0.39
1	96	2.54	0.38
0	44	2.06	0.41

Now for instance, the students who got 3 points in the pre-test have 2 points yet to go in order to get full points, but their average in the post-test is 3.77. This means the actual progress was relatively:-

$$\frac{3.77 - 3.00}{2.00} = 0.39,$$

that is, the students made about 40% progress as compared with the ideal case. Similar calculations for other groups show the values of: 0.36, 0.39, 0.39, 0.41 which are almost the same. Hence, an important conclusion is that progress which the students made in this particular case was about 40%, and what is more significant is that this percentage is almost the same irrespective of the scores in the pre-test. Mathematically this fact is expressed by an equation:-

$$\frac{y - x}{100 - x} = \text{constant.}$$

Having been encouraged by these satisfactory results of ITC, our Council is going to expand its number and scope. After all, the two-week ITC of our Council was more than satisfactory.

As I said before, the Council did not recommend any specific method or theory for English training. The instructors and informants did what they thought most

appropriate for their own students. We could scarcely find any difference in the students' progress according to methods. All were equally effective.

I frankly admit that our ITC is a kind of experiment. I frankly admit also, that we are not yet quite sure that ITC is the best method for our purpose. But I think our experience has told us that it is at least one of the good and effective methods for English training, especially for making students feel less difficulty in international communication by means of English.

Thank you.